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Educator Evaluation Legislation is Model for Collaboration

Detroit News readers might find it unusual that the authors of this column—an ardent supporter of community governed public schools and head of a charter school advocacy organization—see eye-to-eye on education policy being debated in Lansing. However, when it comes to evaluating educators to ensure our kids are learning, we're on the same page.

Effective teachers and administrators can make all the difference in the world when it comes to educating our kids and preparing them for the future. And meaningful evaluations are a critical tool for ensuring kids are learning and ensuring teachers have the tools they need to teach and excel.

Teacher evaluation has been a hot topic in Lansing since 2011-2012 when major teacher tenure reform was passed. Stakeholders have debated this topic for years, and it seems Lansing has finally crafted a solution that recognizes the importance of a quality evaluation, local control and flexibility in implementation. It's time for the Legislature to wrap up the debate, pass teacher evaluation legislation and provide certainty to local schools so they can help good teachers become great.

Earlier this year, Senator Phil Pavlov (R - St. Clair) introduced Senate Bill 103, a comprehensive, common-sense bill that lays out a framework for fair and critical evaluation of teachers. Throughout committee hearings, Sen. Pavlov heard from experts on the frontlines of education and evaluation and worked to present a plan that folks from across the spectrum could agree would help our kids.

Education policy over the last few decades in Michigan has been contentious at nearly every turn. Stakeholders have had differing opinions on what would work best for kids. That's why the work around Senate Bill 103 is so

noteworthy. Sen. Pavlov has worked hard to bring together many different factions, including us, for the common good of Michigan's 1.5 million kids. It should be held up as a model process for tackling challenges in education by inviting and listening to all stakeholders, respecting and building upon the great work already being done in a lot of schools and driving a process toward a consensus, yet an effective, solution.

Evaluating teachers and administrators is critical work and Senate Bill 103 sets clear standards that schools need to meet for effective evaluations. However, it also resists prescribing a vendor-driven, one size fits all approach in favor of respecting the practical reality that all kids do not learn and all teachers should not teach in the same cookie cutter way.

Sen. Pavlov deserves credit and praise for the way he has brought different people together - like us - to a solution that will help all schools across the state help make good teachers great.

That's why we strongly support Senate Bill 103 sponsored by Senator Phil Pavlov and urge the Legislature to do their jobs and pass the bill this month.

Vickie Markavitch is the superintendent of Oakland Schools. Dan Quisenberry is president of the Michigan Association of Public School Academies.